**Being an Effective Board Member**

Boards, Commissions and Committees are made up of highly qualified, responsible, and motivated community members. Though appointed positions, you contribute not only to the success of King County operations, but to the quality of life for all by enabling the county to maintain and improve programs and services for citizens. With such influence comes great responsibility and accountability.

Members represent the public at-large. Appointments often are made to reflect a geographic interest, an area of expertise, or to represent a special interest group or professional association. Remember, each member brings an important perspective to the table and differing points of view produce effective solutions. Keep this in mind as you work with other members.

**As an appointed member you will be expect to:**

* Attend regularly scheduled board, commission or committee meetings, as well as to attend all subcommittee meetings you have agreed to serve on.
* Be punctual so that committee meetings start and end on time.
* Come prepared to participate in conversations and make decisions
* Place your responsibility to the community above your personal interests or beliefs.
* Prepare for your new responsibility by:
* Reviewing agendas and minutes from recent meetings to learn what current issues have been under consideration.
* Familiarize yourself with the documents governing your particular body such as: city ordinances, state statutes, City Council resolutions, advisory body bylaws, relevant element(s) of Comprehensive Plans and other pertinent documents or reports.
* Have a clear understanding about the process, procedure, and conduct of your particular meeting.
* Be able and willing to constructively communicate with fellow members and actively participate in group discussions.
* Be willing to compromise and work as a team in order to reach consensus.
* Board members will oppose discrimination and resist stereotyping in all of its forms, as indicated in the King County Code, and policies on non-discrimination and anti-harassment.

**Meeting Expectations**

Members have a responsibility for the content and productivity of the meetings they attend. They should come prepared to take ownership for their contribution to the end result of the meeting. Meetings do matter. There are many ways in which members can conduct a productive and meaningful meeting.

**A productive meeting happens when:**

* All participants arrive on time and prepared to meaningfully participate.
* There are clear ground rules that all agree to honor.
* Agendas are written and shared.
* The physical environment is comfortable and accommodating.
* State and end times are agreed upon and honored by the group.
* All participates contribute
* The meeting process allows progress of movement and focus.
* Outcome is clear to all.
* Work to be accomplished is defined and assigned.

**Decorum in meetings:**

* Start meetings on time and keep the agenda in mind in order to give each item the appropriate time.
* Announce at the start of a meeting if the order of agenda items is to be rearranged for convenience, for response to those attending only for certain items, or for better pacing of the agenda.
* Let the Chair or presiding officer run the meeting, seek recognition before speaking. Be fair, impartial and respectful of the public, staff and each other; give your full attention with others speak.
* Because people may be attending a meeting for the first time and may be unfamiliar with your procedures, either avoid or explain technical terms or verbal shorthand.
* Listen to audience concerns and do not engage in side conversation or otherwise be distracted during public testimony; public testimony is central to the strength of democracy, and is therefore strongly encouraged.
* Active listening does not mean engaging the public in debate; response is appropriately saved for after the public testimony is closed.
* Close the public testimony before you begin serious deliberation on an issue.
* Endeavor to end meetings at a reasonable hour; short breaks may be helpful during long meetings; extending the meeting beyond an appointed hour may be subjected to a vote when that hour nears.
* Sometimes questions can most effectively focus discussion and direct decision-making. For example:

For Staff:

* What is the history behind this item? What are the benefits and drawbacks?
* What other alternatives did you consider? What would it take for you to support this? What are your concerns?
* What specific, constructive alternatives can you recommend?

For Board members:

* What are we trying to accomplish?
* What are the long-range interests of the community?
* Often you must balance multiple views, neither favoring nor ignoring one individual or group over another; your obligation is to represent a broad-based view of the community’s long-range interests.
* Remember that your group exists to take action.

**The presiding officer has obligations to the group that must be achieved at meetings and should:**

* Follow the agenda
* Remain impartial
* Entertain all motions, even if he/she opposes them.
* Avoid cutting off debate arbitrarily
* Keep the debate of the assembly germane
* Keep the group informed of the motion on the floor at all times
* Maintain control and administer the rules of order.

**General Membership Procedures:**

All Board, Commissions, and Committees shall take formal minutes of their meetings and shall appoint a member to take such minutes, or such minute responsibility may be delegated to a staff support person if there is staff support person assigned to the board, commission, or committee, on a permanent basis who is always in attendance at such meetings.

Except as otherwise state in state law, all meetings of boards, commissions, or committees are open public meeting \*(See Open Public Meetings Act of 1971).

All boards, commission and committees shall establish regular dates and times for meetings, and shall consult with staff about scheduling special meetings and announcing meeting cancelations.

**Rules of Order**

The proceedings of all boards and commissions shall be governed by the most current edition of Roberts Rules of Order.